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September 10, 2009

On behalf of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, we welcome you to the Columbia River Estuary Science and Policy Exchange.

The estuary is a new area of focus for the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program and also is recognized for its important habitat in the federal Biological Opinion on Columbia River hydropower operations. The Council supports strategies that protect, enhance, and restore critical habitat and spawning and rearing grounds in the estuary and lower Columbia River. Hydropower operations upstream change the pattern of water flows and water temperatures in the estuary and, consequently, its characteristics. However, recent scientific evidence suggests that habitat actions in the estuary have the potential to improve survival benefits for most anadromous fish populations.

The purpose of this conference is to discuss that evidence and other information and share ideas among members of the Council, scientists who are working in the estuary, and fish and wildlife managers regarding ongoing habitat restoration work and research, monitoring, and evaluation in the lower Columbia River and estuary. We hope the conference will be educational by providing a forum to identify emerging scientific issues including critical uncertainties and potential gaps in current project implementation that will inform future policy decisions, including development of the next version of the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

We hope you will find the conference interesting and informative and that it will be useful to you in your own work. Thank you again for attending the Columbia River Estuary Science and Policy Exchange.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Dukes".

Joan Dukes
Council Member
Oregon

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Wallace".

Dick Wallace
Council Member
Washington